PITTSBURGH
FAN FORUM
T GORMAN '96

PITTSBURGH FAN FORUM

THE BULLETIN OF THE PITTSBURGH CLUB

NOVEMBER DECEMBER, 1977

NO. 34

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PITTSBURGH FAN FORUM is published by the Pittsburgh Comix Club. Published bi-monthly. Subscriptions: $4.00 a year for six issues. Back issues available for $1.00 a copy. Advertising rates: $8.00 a page, $5.00 a half page. Address all correspondence to: Ben Pondexter, 827 Anaheim St., Pittsburgh, Pa., 15219. The Pittsburgh Comix Club is wholly responsible for the contents of this magazine. All comic book characters used here-in are copyrighted characters and are copy right their respective owners.

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Editorial

I am extemely pleased with this issue of PITTSBURGH FAN FORUM (just in case you've forgotten what you're reading). It has more pages, professionally set type, and less of me than last issue. I'm not trying to be falsely modest. It's just that this is PITTSBURGH Fan Forum, NOT Gary Sassaman's Fan Forum. My hand-picked bunch of regulars are back this issue along with some welcome new faces in both the writing and art departments. I'm glad, believe me, but not enough of you are contributing. The core of the club is here, but the core of the club is always there when you need them, and usually when you don't need them. You want a voice in fandom? Here it is. Use it.

I am typing this on a very cute little machine known as a Varityper. It cost $10,000 and Ben will get the bill for it next week. Just kidding (someone pick Ben up off the floor). Actually it was bought by my newspaper bosses for production of our weekly paper. It was just sitting here looking very bored so I decided to use it in a mad orgy of typing which started yesterday and is now coming to a close. I'd appreciate your comments on this. But please bear in mind that I am only human and she is only a machine and ne'er the twain shall meet. What I'm saying is it's very hard to correct typographical errors and she won't do it for me so excuse them...ignore them...spit on them...I don't care, but please don't send me letters telling me I spelled cat wrong on page 19.

I am extremely pleased to welcome back Editor Emeritus Mark Lerer with this issue. Mark, safely hidden away in the hallowed halls of Princeton (he's a janitor there...yessir I always did say that boy was going to clean up in this world) has two fine pieces in this issue, the continuation of his Steve Gerber interview, and an extraordinary piece on why we should stop comparing comics to film. And he's right.

I would also like to thank Paul Levitz for the fine piece starting on the next page. Paul, who failed to teach me poker at Pittcon because of my learning disabilities (read: stupidity), has answered a long-standing question in fandom: namely are the creators of comics writing for a specific audience. I'm sure you'll find the answer as entertaining and thought-provoking as I did.

Now a word about our cover, a piece of art that would have been better suited for last issue. I like it. That's all. I feel it is a superior piece of work and that it makes an attractive cover. And anyone that disagrees with me has myself and the Howard Bender Fan Club to contend with.

One final note: this issue is a special issue, this time dealing with movies. I think you'll find a good balance of reading and visual material here. Our regular columnists have all taken it upon themselves to talk about film this time and I've thrown in a selection of comics material just to even the flow. Hope you enjoy it.

Aren't you too old to be reading Comic Books? Maybe.

by Paul Levitz

A "Total Honesty" panel at Creation '76 was asked about the age level of the readership of DC and Marvel Comics...whether they were identical, similar, or whether the creators of the magazines were even conscious of the age of their audience. This article is, in part, a response to that question and is dedicated to the questioner.

It begins, the psychologists tell us, sometime before a child is fifteen days old. At that time the average infant can see his surroundings sufficently well enough to understand that he's in danger when he's on the edge of a cliff. The child is still too young to move away from the danger, but the perception is there. And perception is what it's all about.

Within the next few years, the child develops this visual perception: learning to associate what he sees with reality, and grasping the difference between a picture of an object and the object itself. As visual perception grows, and through association, the child grows more interested in pictures. They slowly provide him with interesting stimuli that aren't available to him in reality.

Enter, the child's picture book; a simple attempt to tell a story entirely in pictures that a child can understand and appreciate. Perhaps, as the books chosen for him are designed for progressively older readers, words will be introduced. They will eventually be chosen and written for the specific purpose of teaching the child some of thos selfsame words

Maybe the comic book enters the scene here. It does'nt need to. It could have come into the child's life two or three years earlier, with the picture book, before the child even recognized those peculiar, messy squiggles as words.

If the comic book has become a part of the child's world at this stage in his growth, then it's probably a Gold Key comic. Although it could be a Harvey title, or

even one of the other brands. But if it isn't a Gold Key or a Harvey, then comics are likely to fade out of the child's life for a while, and return at a later date. This is for a very simple reason: most Gold Key and Harvey titles ARE simple. Simple enough to be "read" without any reading of the words. The ideas expressed in them can be communicated effectively without words and retain their interest.

Hopefully, as the child grows, so will his ability to understand concepts. With that growth, he'll find his old comics easier to read (now that he looks at the words as well), and one day, too easy to read. When there's no depth left to the magazine in his eyes ("Aw, that's just kid's stuff.") he'll turn to new friends.

Perhaps these friends will be found in the more sophisticated Gold Key titles, those no longer populated by the familiar funny animals of the playroom or the suddenly still picture from the television, the twentieth century's babysitter in loco parentis. Certainly these are the comics aimed at picking up the just-reading reader, and aimed to the degree that there is usually one of these magazines slipped between the two Disney-type titles in a Gold Key comicpac.

The reader is now associating words and pictures for pleasure, and especially for the pleasure involved in mastering a new medium. He's really learning to read, yet he's having fun all the while.

Now, one hopes, he puts aside his old friends for a closer approximation of the real world...one of the SUPERMAN family of comics, perhaps. His new comics have a touch of the real, a not-so-stereotyped emotion here, a mixed motive there, a conflict that's not all good and evil, and other such choices to be made. It's still dressed in a candy-colored world where the Comics Code is taken to heart and the spirit and letter of the law observed, as well as evil punished, but it's a little more real. Perhaps only to the degree that when the villain drops a bomb on the hero, the hero MIGHT bleed.

Naturally Superman is not the only character whose adventures are in this class, not even the most representative. But it is the best known, and therefore the one that parents are most likely to select for their children when the yougsters begin demanding more than Donald Duck.

UP, up, and away, like the man says. Next stop at the newsstand, our evolving young comics reader selects a copy of a more mature DC comic, a tilte which demands more of him. He has to participate in this new world: make a more distinct choice about the nature of good

and evil. He's no longer satisfied with knowing that Superman is the good guy. He wants to know why, and believe the reason.

Healthy sign, that. If it's not present, and it's just the reader shifting magazines with the growing length of the words he can understand, then he's stagnating. His mind is leaving a part of itself behind, in a simpler age than the one on his birth certificate.

From there, the scene shifts to the newsstand rack holding those DC comics designated for the slightly-more literate reader, or to the Marvel comics line. The Marvel line, with a degree of near-solidarity matched only by Gold Key, is designed with a single level of readership in mind. A half-dozen titles stay on the fringe of thie readership, either above or below the main body, but most are tight in the audience's track. And many titles published by DC these days are aimed at the same reader, whoever he or she is.

These titles put the choice squarely in the reader's hands: what's your definition of the problem faced by the protagonist. No mistake about it, these magazines have protagonists, not heroes. The next level down has heroes, good men and true, but this one has people who do heroic things frequently, but not alwaysnfor heroic reasons. They-re flawed individuals, and being flawed, are closer to reality.

It's still a two-dimensional, four-color reality. It still has to match the Comics Code, or at least meet it half way. The motives are just a little more realistic, the actions a little less decisively right. And it's a world in which you can dwell for a long time.

In many ways, it's the same world as the dime novel, the mystery story, the old wave of science-fiction, the pulp, and all the other forms of literature that are interested in how things happen, and just touch lightly upon why. It's the same as the workk of a bad historian, who gives you all the information you would have gathered by being when and where the story happened, but fails to give you a sense of the personalities and complexities that made it happen. In other words, the emotional load of the stories is flat. You're told what emotions you should have at the end of the story, not inspired to experience them.

A few comics exceed these boundaries of emotion. They inspire thought and individual participation to the degree of making an individual emotional decision. But thry're few and far between, like stories of similar worth in the other genres named above. And like those others, Gresham's Law works in comics, and the bad does tend to drive away the good. The good is hoarded

by those who can make the distinction, but the bad is passed around by all.

By the time the reader can appreciate these stories for what they are, he should be moving away from comics. Not discarding them, for no medium should ever be discarded as long as it holds something that can give pleasure, just as some children's books can enthrall even the most literate of adults by their beauty, their imagination, or their charm. But now the reader is ready for more meat in his literary diet.

Shifting from comics to prose, the level of emotion suddenly jumps in potential reality. The best practitioneers of prose fiction, or even non-fiction, have portrayed emotion with far greater reality than a comic book permits. The effect is more direct, no onger being part of a collaborative effect of two media; less restrained, since the physical limits of format are far wider in the prose field; and designed for the reader who can appreciate it.

The process does not, or should not, stop here. The individual (no longer simply a reader) should grow to the point where he can appreciate more and more abstract forms of pleasure, where more of the emotion is supplied by his participation. Poetry, ranging first from the poetic tale to the free-form poetry style designed to springboard the listener or reader into conjuring their own images around an inspiration. And beyond words, to the realm of art, where the picture alone brings the sense of feeling that once words and pictures were needed to summon. The realm where the image is all, and all in the viewer's mind, as well. In short, a full circle of growth.

Having reached the stage where creativity and beauty is in the mind, and is only triggered by outside stimuli, should comics be discarded? No. The answer remains the same as before. No area of potential needs to be discarded, but almost needs to be added to, or built upon. So on one level the answer to this article's leading question is no, never. But that's only on the level on an individual considering comics one of the many ares in his personal repertoire of reading and viewing pleasure. On the level of an individual who remains limited to comics as his principal imaginative focus, the answer is a definite yes. No age should be attached to that statement of "too old", for no two people grow at the same pace, but dated or not, the age is reached all the same.

PAUL LEVITZ is a writer and editor for DC Comics, Inc., and hopes that he will never grow too old to appreciate comics.

ALL AROUND... Goes to the Movies

by ben pondexter

I don't believe that "King Kong" made anywhere near the money they thought it would, so let's hope the powers that be are through with remakes. But even while writing this, I recall reading that Paramount has made plans to redo "When Worlds Collide". Oh well...

I fell in love with the movies a long, long time ago, and even today they often have the power to touch a nerve now and then.

"Gone With the Wind"...I really believe that Scarlett managed to get Rhett back somehow.

"Dirty Harry" went to jail with all those bodies laying around at the end of his last picture. With all those laws broken, he must have.

"The Other Side of Midnight"--strangely enough I think this might have been better made back in the forties. Somehow or other I did not really believe the sex scenes in the movie, and found that this threw the picture out of whack

I'm nuts for musicals, but my standing rule is Boy must get Girl. "New York, New York" was this one of your box-office problems???

I hate what they've done to today's Movie magazines. If any one knows a good one, please tell me.

I believe it was the May issue of TIME that said "The Spy That Loved Me" had brought so much from so many other Bond movies that you couldn't help but like it. It was better than "The Man with the Golden Gun", but that's not saying much.

Talking about remakes, I remember that MGM remade "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" with Glenn Ford in the Valentino part. And then they redid "The Women" and added men. Of course, they never did figure out why these failed at the box-office.

Speaking for myself, I always hated War pictures. I never see them if I can get out of it. There have been some exceptions to this rule but not to many.

High on my list of all-time favorites is "Freaks". Until I saw it a year or so ago, I would not believe it could be so much more than a horror movie. But it is.

For years I had a theory that American film critics are much too hard on American films, while sometime praising a foreign film to the sky. Agreements or disagreements are invited. Write me.

The SPIDER—MAN movie was a lot less campy than the first WONDER WOMAN movie and not

all that bad. Maybe it was the camera angles, but most of the time, Peter Parker looked much better than Spidey.

One nice touch was the way he went up and down the walls. He really did look like a spider, something I had not given much thought to.

In any case, I hope the show is picked up for a series.

"Star Trek will be deep into production by the time you read this. I understand that all of the original cast members are back except for Leonard Nimoy. Expect most characters to have a promotion in rank. One thing for sure...the fourth network has a great chance with this one. It certainly will be eagerly awaited.

"Casablanca" was playing at Pghlange 9 and it's still a great movie. They don't make them like that anymore and it keeps getting better.

I believe that Hollywood wants to make science-fiction films without the science-fiction, because they sure keep trying.

Songs to remember from films:
"As time goes by"
"I'm through with love"
"Last time I saw Paris"

I want my picture to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. I hate the films that just stop, leaving you up in the air.

Pghlange IX

or: How to single-handedly take on a living skeleton with a superstrength spell while trying to take over the universe.

by Jim Johnston

My first Pghlange. I was expecting to meet people like Issac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, and Kelly Freas. Well, I was slightly disappointed. This year, WPSFA honored its founding mothers. This consisted of the following people: Ginger Buchanan, a pro-columnist in COSMOS; Linda Bushyager, a new pro author, who is also the co-publisher of GRANFALLON, and editor of KARASS; Suzle Tompkins, who helps onGRAN—FALLON and THE SPANISH INQUISITION, and won the FAAN Award for the latter. And finally Gene Dimodica, who so-far has done nothing all that spectacular.

Okay, now the con itself. The films weren't that fantastic. The only one really worth seeing was "Forbidden Planet" (which everyone has seen thousands of times anyway) and that never showed up. So we were left with "When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth", "Casablanca","The Lady Vanishes", "The Hunchback of Notre Dame", and about three hours worth of trailers (the kind you see, not the kind you drive). The only movie I watched part of was "When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth", and after you got over the special effects and the fact that everyone wore almost nothing, it got very boring, so when a bunch of left to roll a keg into the party room, we never returned.

I was otherwise occupied both nights, so I only walked in and out of the parties. As such I really couldn't say how they went, but form what little I did see they seemed to be going pretty well. At the end of each, there were few people left standing, sober or both.

The Buffet. The food tasted only slightly better than McDonalds, and if you wanted anything other than coffee to drink you had to wait half-an-hour for service. There were also some very uncouth people whom didn't wait their turn in line (this means uoy, Ben). The company and conversation was good, the speakers interesting, and I finally learned what Pghlange meant.

Attendance was about 150 and the hucksters room was very, very small. Both would probably have been largerexcept there was a SF con in West Virginia that same weekend. The hotel tried to rip us off by trying to make us pay regular prices for rooms and moving check-out time from 2pm to noon. The second thing they got away with. Next year's con will be at the Marriot Inn.

You maybe wondering about the title of this article. It has to do with games called Cosmic Encounters, and Dragons and Dungeons. In one you try to take over the universe and in the other you take on whatever the person playing God sends at you. D and D is very hard to stop. That is why I didn't attend the party Saturday night. A bunch of peopleand myself started playing about 1 pm Saturday and except for a break for the buffet, didn't stop until 6 am Sunday. We were some of the first people at McDonalds that morning!

GARY FASSMAN
©MARVEL COMICS

An interview with Steve Gerber

by Mark Lerer

(Two issues ago, Mark Lerer discussed with Steve Gerber his reputation as a comics writer, commerciality and the comic book business, and his creations, in this interview held for the P. C. C. at the 1976 New York Comic Art Convention. This issue, part 3 and the conclusion.)

ML: We were talking about tragedy; let's go back to humor. This story has been told a few times, but I'd like to go overit: how you got a hold of the editorship of CRAZY, of all things.

SG: Marv Wolfman recommended me to Stan, and I think Roy was also enthusiastic about it. He knew I had done some humor stuff in high school and was still very interested in that sort of thing. I wish I had been on it longer than I was. Again, a victim of preconceptions...of what kind of humor magazine had to be done in order to sell. Also, a victim of severe underpayment. What I was being paid was not commensurate with the effort I was putting in. And, too, one issue after I had been on the book, they told me it was going to be a monthly for the summer. So, with virtually no inventory, in the midst of trying to assemble a new group of artists and writers, and trying to put together anew format for the book, I had to do three issues within four weeks of one another. It proved to be too much. I really couldn't hang on to it. In a way I'm very bitter about that, because I think that the book could have been turned into something different from what it is.

ML: You're dissatisfied with the current product?

SG: I loathe it. It's awful; I don't even look at it. What is now is a very bland copy of MAD, or SICK, or CRACKED, all those magazines. My own feeling is that the newsstands didn't need another one of those! The reason CRAZY was doing so badly before I got on it was because that market had already been saturated, that it was time to try something else, again. I never saw sales figures on any but the first of my issues and they were as bad as any preceding that.

ML: What would you have done with the book?

SG: Every bit of humor in humor magazine does not have to be a parody of something else...that was the first bit of philosophy that I wanted to make part of the CRAZY editorial standards. Certain features like "Moose", Lee Marrs'"Crazy Lady"...I was reall y happy to see that Marv brought these things in, because they represented to me the step forward from what had been done in the other humor magazines, the other black-and-white humor magazines of that time. I would like to have done more of that. I would like to have had people doing short stories for the magazine, funny short stories. I would like to have done more articles...and done them better...like the pop-psychology

take-off "How to Gang Up on Your Hang Ups". I would have liked to introduce more departments, like the news flashes, CRAZY'S Hot Flashes". I would like to have gotten away from words like "clod" and "moxie" and "spaghetti"...

ML: The MAD vocabulary.

SG: Exactly. And moved to something a little more sophisticated, and even if it wasn't more sophisticated, just different. Funny in a different way. I never got the chance. I would have really liked to stay on that book for a long time. Stan wanted a carbon copy of MAD, told me in so many words, felt that's what would sell, and I told him I couldn't do it. My own instincts would be fighting me all the way. I didn't want to edit a magazine that would make me miserable.

ML: You've suggested that what the future holds for you is not comics.

SG: That's right. I'm working on a nonfiction book on the comics. I'm hoping to get contributions for this collection of essays...from all the editors who don't like my stuff! As well as some of the people who DO and some of the artists in the field now. Just an anecdotal look at people's experiences in the field, from any standpoint they choose to go at it.

ML: Sounds interesting. How long have you been working on this?

SG: This is a new project. I have an agent interested in it now. As I say, I'm soliciting contributions. The other thing I'm working on is a collection of short stories...not really a collection as much as a cycle of short stories. I recently completed the first complete prose piece I've done in eight years, and the people who've read it liked it. I kind of like the way it turned out. It's not comics, it's not science-fiction, it's not sword-and-sorcery, it's mainstream, which is primarily what I'm interested in. The genre fiction holds absolutely no interest for me at all. What happened during thr writing of this is that several characters did walk-on bits and ambled out of the story and I became as interested in those charactrs as I was in the two main ones, and I realized that this whole cycle of short stories could be built around characters that appeared in the first one. This is also sitting with my agent right now.

ML: Anything in film?

SG: Nothing except an intense desire to do it. Film and television, and I've worked in radio, too, and I'd like to do all those things again. I hope that the fans I have made in comics, this strange cult following you talked about, will appreciate the efforts in other media too. This sounds egotistical, but I hope they're Gerber fans and not just comics fans,and can follow me into these other places. Although I don't like the idea of being a leader! I don't know where I'm going! Really it's like the blind leading the blind, or at least the blind-folded.

ML: I hate to speak of it as something that's been ended already, but what has your tenure in comic books left you? Is there some legacy or something?

SG: What has it left me?

ML: Yes.

SG: Spent! It's left me very tired!

ML: Have you gotten almost nothing out of the years you've spent

in comics?

SG: That would be unfair to say. I won't know how much I've gotten out of it until I've gotten some distance from it, until I'm able to look at it a little more objectively. Ihave learned one thing: it's a cruel lesson, something that everyone in comics finally learns, and Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster learned it first; never give anything away too easily, for too little! It has definitely left me with lesson.

Beyond that, there have been a lot of friendships made and a lot of good experiences and a lot of silly things that have happened. There have been the fun moments as well. It would be silly to deny that, and very untrue.

But right now, I'm afraid that what I'm seeing from four years in comics are the frustrations, the fact that it has almost wrecked my prose style. But it has also given my prose a certain dimension of movement. My stories are mow a little faster paced than they were. What's happening is a very strange transition. As the comics move more toward the pacing of prose, the prose is moving more toward the pacing of comics. So my prose is moving faster, livelier, and more interestingly than when I first got into comics.

ML: Probably more visual.

SG: Yes, I think so. And the comics seem to be slowing down, but that doesn't bother me. I like the way my stories are paced and I don't know if anyone else does, but to me they read at a very comfortable pace, most of the time. Not too fast and not too slow. There's a lot going on within the books, even if it isn't all punching and hitting. There are changes in the characters. But I think what comics has done to my prose largely has been bad, and I hate to say it. Having to write that stilted kind of dialog...

ML: I was really not talking about comics as a business, as working for Stan Lee or anything, but comics as a medium.

"I will say this: I don't think the duck is a fluke. I think it has succeeded because it had the commercial potential to succeed. I think that alone will have some impact, the character more than myself, on the comics scene."

SG: You learn to write a certain kind of dialog. It's not the kind od dialog that belongs in prose. There's a lot more leeway in prose. And that hurts. The dialog I started writing in prose after I worked in comics for a long time seemed very...well, as if people had spent a long time thinking about what they were going to say and formulating it before they said it. Almost too compact, too quotable. Comics are like that...very pithy kind of things. It's like every line Howard the Duck speaks is going to be a joke. And it doesn't work that way in prose. Another thing it left me with was a style of purple prose, from writing all those Man-Thing captions, that is completely unacceptable in short stories and comtempoary "literature", contempoary writing, or contempoary popular fiction, let's say. Writing a real story after writing comics for so long is a real challenge. A Major Challenge. I'm amazed I finished it. There was a lot of banging my head against a wall trying to shatter alot of habits: verbal habit, patterns, stylistic habit. It's not all broken down yet, but it's started and my comics writing has changed as a result. There are drastic changes from when I was doing MAN—THING and SUB—MARINER.

ML: I think we'd agree it's gotten more recognizable as an individual style. Do you think you personally will have any impact on the comic book scene? The changes which you spoke of before: wanting to introduce different elements, breaking cliches...do you think your tenure in comics will have any success?

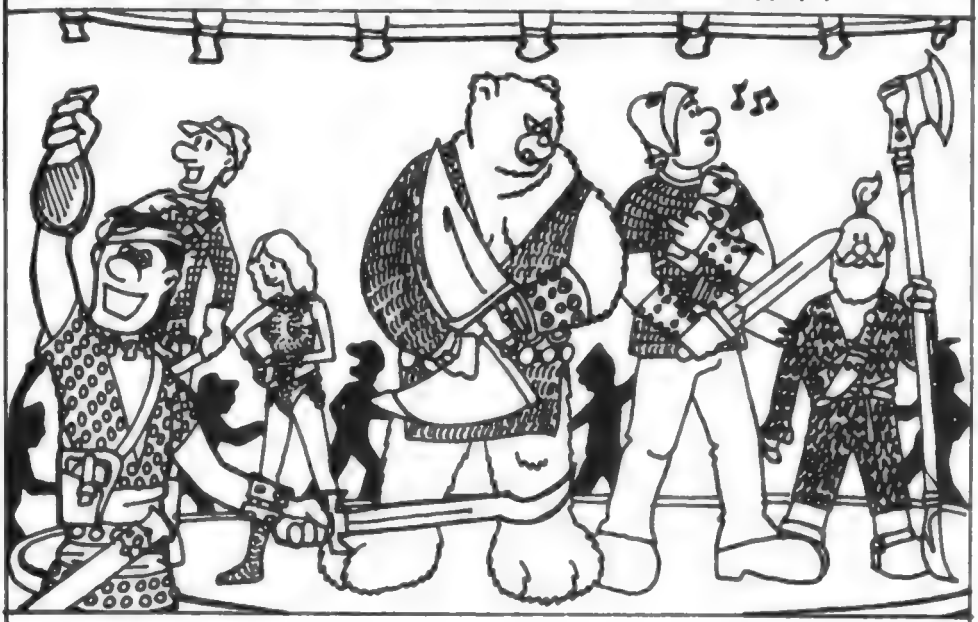
SG: I don't know. I don't think it's has much impact on the other people writing in comics now. I think it may not show itself until the next generation of comic writers, when people who grew up on MAN—THING and HOWARD THE DUCK start writing comics.God help all the people with preconceptions! I might even get interested in reading comics again. I think those people will come in with such a different view of what can be done in the comics. I think there may even be hope at that time.

I will say this. I don't think the duck is a fluke. I think it succeeded because it had the commercial potential to succeed. I think that alone will have some impact, the character more than myself, on the comics scene.

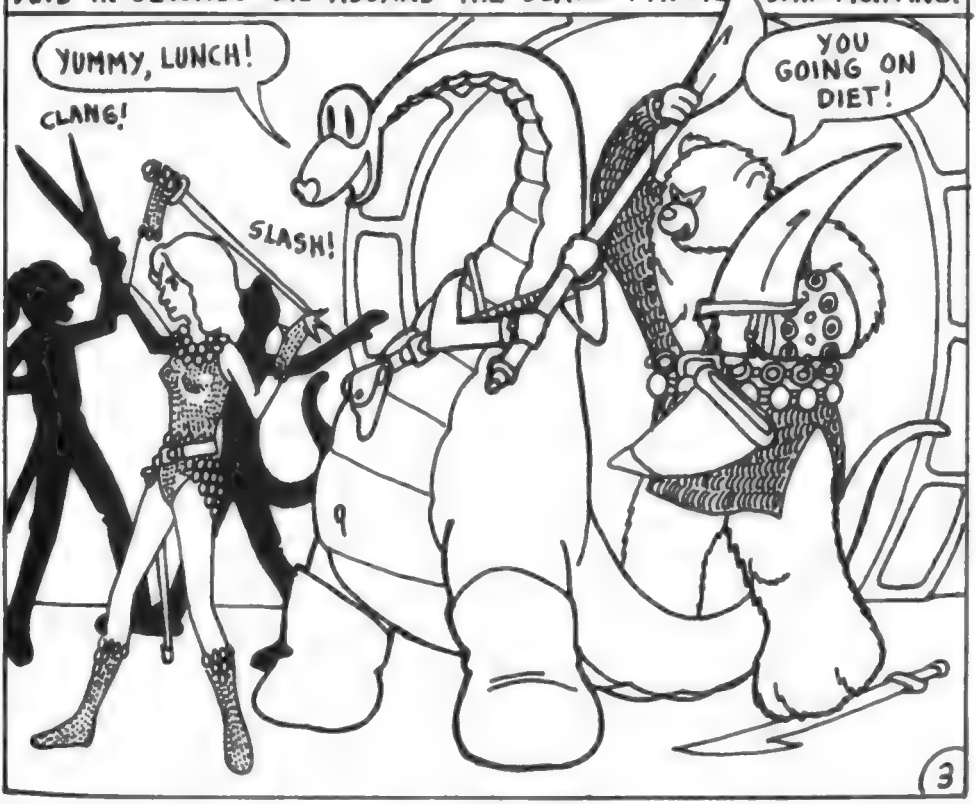
Tut
PRESENTS
CARTOONEERS
BUT CAPTAIN, OUR STORAGE CHAMBERS ARE FULL AND OUR SLAVE CELLS ARE OVERCROWED!
ONE MORE GRIP ABOUT ATTACKING THAT CARGO SHIP AND I'M GOING TO FRY YOU!
YOU EAT ONE MORE SLAVE YOU SLIMY WART WORM AND WE'LL START DEDUCTING THEM FROM YOUR PAY!
1

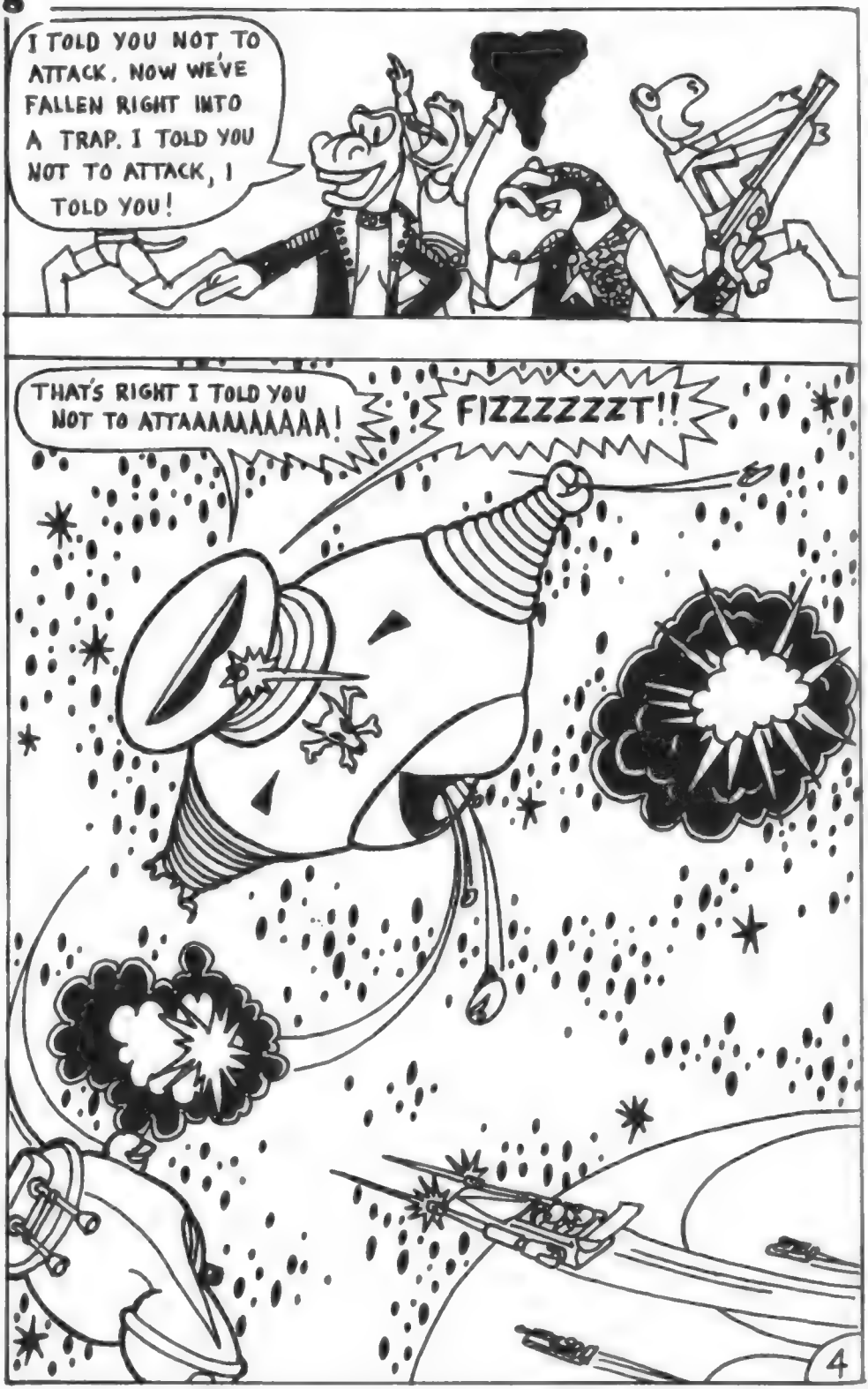
MEANWHILE HIDING ABOARD THE CARGO SHIP IS A COMPANY OF CARTOONEERS READY TO SPRING THE TRAP THEY HAVE SET TO STOP THE SLAVE-PIRATES IN THIS SECTION OF SPACE.

THE ALERT IS GIVEN AND THE CARTOONEERS RUSH TO THIER SHIPS AND TELEPORTERS READY TO SPRING THIER TRAP.



AND IN SECONDS ARE ABOARD THE SLAVE-PIRATE'S SHIP FIGHTING.




I TOLD YOU NOT TO ATTACK. NOW WE'VE FALLEN RIGHT INTO A TRAP. I TOLD YOU NOT TO ATTACK, I TOLD YOU!
THAT'S RIGHT I TOLD YOU NOT TO ATTAAAAAAAAAA!
FIZZZZZZT!!
4

from the files of... Bob Youhouse

This issue I will delve into the subject of movies. There are some science-fiction films that I would like to see again which haven't been shown on local stations for a long time. They are: "Destination Moon", "Forbidden Planet", and "Rocketship X—M", and "Riders to the Stars". I would like to see the following movies in a theatre or at a con in the area: "Just Imagine", and "Things to Come".

The West was the theme of many great movies. "Bad Day at Black Rock" (1954), starring Spencer Tracy, Robert Ryan, Anne FRancis, and Ernest Borgnine, was about a town secret and the stranger who uncovered it. "High Noon" (1952), starring Gary Cooper and Grace Kelly, was about a lawman who has to face outlaws on his wedding day. The Clint Eastwood movies such as "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly", and others, were popular in the sixties. Many other westerns were made in this era.

War films are my next topic. Such films as "Run Silent, Run Deep" (1958), "The Great Escape" (1963), "Sink the Bismark" (1960), "Twelve O'clock High" (1950), and "Stalag 17" (1953) were very popular. "The Bridge on the River Kwai" (1957), starring William Holden, Alec Guiness, and Sessue Hayakawa, was about a hardened British officer who drives his men to build a bridge as therapy, while an escaped prisoner tries to destroy it.

The gladiator films had such entries as "Hercules" and "Hercules Unchained".

The beach party films included "Palm Springs Weekend" (1963), "Pajama Party" (1964), and too many others.

Movies about animals such as "Born Free" (1966), and "A Dog of Flanders" (1960) and the Disney films have always been popular.

Marilyn Monroe was a popular actress in the fifties and early sixties before her untimely death. Her films included "Don't Bother to Knock" (1952), which was her first dramatic role, "Bus Stop" (1956), and "The Misfits" (1960).

Romance sagas such as "Gone With the Wind" and "Wuthering Heights" (both 1939), are as popular now as when they were released.

The jungle movie was chiefly represented by the many "Tarzan" movies.

There were mysteries, musicals, spy and kung fu craze movies and many other genres I haven't even touched on.

Some films can't be classified but I'll mention a few of them anyway: "Casablanca" (1942), and "Citizen Kane" (1941).

I would like to end this article with George Lucas."THX 1138" (already on TV) and "American Grafitti" may be rereleased to theaters because of the enormous popularity of "Star Wars".

I could have mentioned many other films in this article and would like to hear from you about your favorite movies.

LUCKY LUKE— undaunted but not unDaltoned

by Tom Hegeman

A number of issues back (in No. 12 to be exact) I opined as how it might be a good idea for Dargaud Publishers to introduce Lucky Luke to America before giving them a taste of Asterix. The idea still holds. It would, however, be appropriate to give some idea what the strip is about and why it is such a successful and fuuny one at that.

Lucky Luke is awestern parody and a good one. The fact that this should be done in Europe is not surprising. Europeans see our films including many westerns. They are thus familiar with the idiom and able to view it in a detached sort of way which allows them to see the absurdities of the genre. Of course the fact that the creator of the strip spent 6 years in the U. S. doesn't hurt either.

The strip was created in 1946 as a one-shot for the magazine "Spirou" by Maurice de' Bevere who signs all his work Morris. It quickly became a weekly feature. In 1955 Rene' Goscisnny (now of "Asterix fame) took over the writing at Morris' request and the team remains to this day.

There are a number of more or less regular characters in the strip. Lucky Luke is a regular, of course. After all, it is his strip. He is the original, pure, unflappable cowboy.

The final scene in every story.

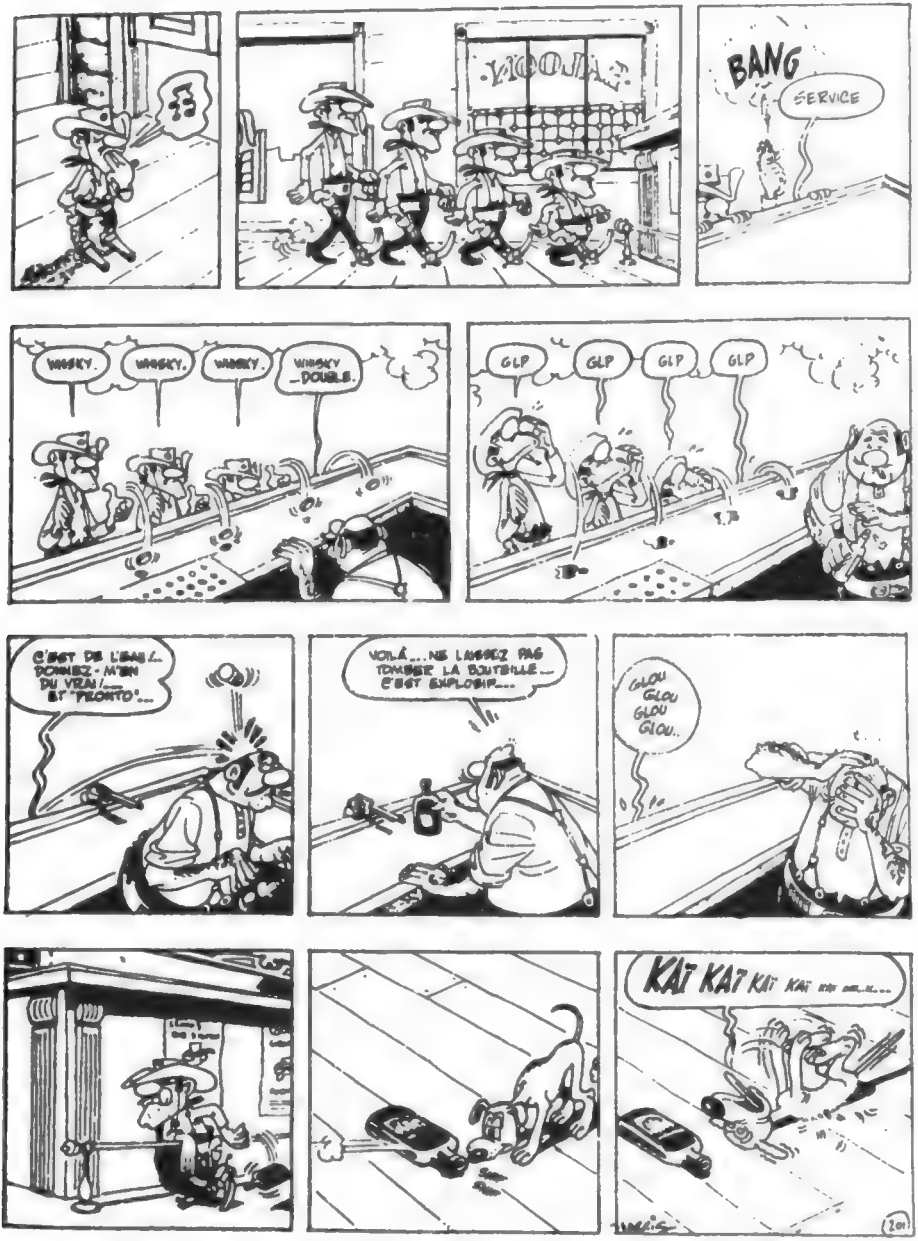
He drinks soda pop when others drink beer or whiskey, he rides a white horse, and he's a crack shot. He never shhots people, though. He always shoots the guns out of their hands or the like.

He is cool, perhaps the only comic character cooler than Corto Maltese. He is also the straight man of the strip. The rest of the world goes crazy around him but he is unaffected.

There is his horse, Jolly Jumper. A more faithful steed was never had by anyone. Jolly Jumper is at least as aware of what is going on around him as any of the humans in the strip. His comments (to himself) are caustic. Most of them are reserved for Rin Tin Can.

Rin Tin Can is the dumbest dog in the West (or, for that matter, the World). An obvious spoof of Rin Tin Tin, he is often employed by Goscinng to botch up Lucky Luke at the last moment and keep the story moving.

And then there are the Daltons. The Daltons are to Lucky Luke what



One of the oldest gags going but one used well. In case you don't read French, Joe complains that the whiskey is water and asks for the real stuff. The bartender warns him not to drop the bottle. It'll blow up.

Les • Vrais • Dalton © Morris-Dupuis

Lex Luthor is to Superman. They are the perrenial foes, appearing in about a third of the stories, and in some ways of equal star stature with Lucky Luke himself. Not that there aren't any other good villains. Billy the Kid, Judge Roy Bean, and Calamity Jane have all appeared and tangled with our hero. But somehow they just can't match the Daltons.

The pace of the stories is fast. It has to be. The stories appear first in magazines, a few pages each week, and must be funny and advance the story. They end up as a series of encounters between Lucky Luke and the Daltons until Luke wins. The strength of the stories comes as much from the sight gags employed as from the skill with which the authors handle the stories.

Goscinny and Morris know how to make the most out of a good thing. You can see for yourself from the examples reprinted here that they can take an old gag and still keep it funny.

They get a fair amount of mileage out of certain stock characters, in much the same way the old silent films did. Cowardly sheriffs are one. Another is the supposedly ignorant Indian who manages to bamboozle everyone. These types of characters can be used when a weekly segment needs some humor and not all that much can be found in the plot itself. Transferred to the books, they form incredibly funny vignettes. They also help to give the story a loose feel.

Unlike Asterix, only a few of the Lucky Luke books have been translated into English. Like the Asterix books these translations are done for British readers, not Americans.

The translations, however, are excellent, even better than the originals. The reason is not too hard to see. In the French, you have taken a western genre and put it in a foreign language. When it is translated, the genre is put back into its natural language, in a sense it is made more complete. But with so few translated, if you want to read any number you're going to have to learn to read French.

RAN-TAN-PLAN !! LE CHIEN LE PLUS STUPIDE QUI AIT JAMAIS EXISTÉ !
J'AI DÉJÀ VU CETTE TÊTE-LÀ QUELQUE PART...
ON NE PEUT PAS ME REPROCHER DE NE PAS AIMER LES BÊTES, MAIS CELLE-LÀ, JE LA MÉPRISE.

Lucky Luke, Rin Tin Can and Jolly Jumper.

And Now, a Word from Our...

ron kienzle

First, I'd like to thank Ben Pondexter, our leader, for appointing me as the club's third officer (officially Secretary-Treasurer). Due to possible relocation for a little thing called work in January, I may not be able to serve out the full term. Still I hope to do my best.

For those interested, club officers are not elected. The Vice-president and Secretary-treasurer are appointed by the president. The president is Ben. He has the job until death, resignation, or (heaven forbid) impeachment. The President appoints all committee chairmen and members. It is not as "dictatorial" as it sounds. It really is more of a constitutional monarchy. Committee chairmen and members are most always volunteers.

On second thought, for some it may seem a little dictatorial. Especially those who did not show up for the September meeting. Why were you not there? Nine, yes nine, made it on time. A few managed to arrive late. Were you afraid to get your raffle tickets? Granted that the Pirates were playing a few blocks away, but I found a place to park nearby. Pitsburghers could have come by bus. John Persky suggested to me that perhaps we should have active and inactive members. Those who show up for less than four meetings a year would become inactive members, and would have less say in club matters. People who live outside the immediate Pittsburgh area would be exempt. Come on...if you don't show up for meetings howcan you claim to be a member?

Lastly, what BIG con will the club attend in 1978, excluding Pittcon '78? I'll go to the Seuling con outside of New York as soon as he gets to Pittsburgh. Besides I'd go to the July con, assuming it is in New York, for the weekend only. What about Newcon in Boston? Or Detroit? Any other ideas? San Diego was nice, but not to many can afford to go. Any suggestions?

Another look at Star Wars

by Ron Kienzle

A SHORT STAR WARS QUIZ

1. How many functional humanoid robots were shown in the film?
2. How many Jawas first picked up the stunned R2-D2?
3. What was the total number of Jawas shown in the film?
4. How many sand people were shown in the film?
5. What actor supplied the voice of Darth Vader?
6. What is the nationality of the actor who played Darth Vader in the film (the physical actor, not the voice-over mentioned in question 5)? British is unacceptable.
7. How many human women were shown in the film?
8. Name two of the women.
9. What does TIE (as in TIE fighter) stand for?
10. In the novel, the call number of the stormtrooper that Luke impersonated was THX-1138. What were the letters of the call number of this character in the film?
11. What were the two types of rebel fighters?
12. What type did Luke fly?
13. Did Ben Kenobi die during the film?
14. Aside from Central America, the film was shot in three different locales. Name them.
15. Vader was the Dark Lord of what?

ANSWERS TO BE PRINTED NEXT ISSUE.

"Star Wars " was a movie of stereotypes. All the major characters were typed except for three: Chewbacca, and the two droids.

Luke was the innocent country boy on whom was thrust greatness. Kenobi was the wise old wizard. Princess Leia was the valiant rebel leader fighting for truth and justice. Governor Tarkin was the evil ruler that finally gained the power he craved. Darth Vader was the evil wizard who battles for the evil rulers, until his moment to gain his own evil ends comes. Han Solo represents the conquest of good over evil; .the pirate who only fights for money helps save the day.

Chewbacca and the droids don't fir any stereotypical role. Indeed, they don't even serve any useful plot purpose. True, something like R2-D2 was needed to bring Luke into the struggle, but a robot of more than humanoid design which could speak "english" could have servrd jkust as well. Anyone, humanoid or otherwise, could have been Solo's first mate. What these three characters supplied was vulnerability.

None of the major plot characters, good or evil, could show fear. In pure battle of good vs. evil each side is dedicated to their goal. Neither can run. Solo only seemed to run out on Luke and the Princess. Vader had no choice. With the Death Star gone, he had nothing to fight with. Even stereotypes know when to run and fight another day. But Chewy was afraid of the creature in the garbage masher. C3PO was afraid of being melted down. They could be scared.

Also, they could be hurt. The droids especially. After all, machines can be repaired. C3PO gets his head all dented in and loses

an arm and turns up whole and shining at the end. R2-D2 gets zapped by Vader and turns up whole at the end.

These three characters were needed for relief. The stereotypes could not deviate much from their modes. Ben had to be self-sacrificing. Leia could not break under pressure.Solo had to come back to help. Luke had to be the one to destroy the Death Star, just as he will eventually be the one to destroy Darth Vader. The droids and Chewy could fail. They could show fear. They could be injured. They were in the film to worry the audience. Now you really didn't think that Luke, or Han, or Leia could be killed or hurt. You really didn't think the rebel base would get blasted by the Death Star.

Final Note: If any of you have not bought the novel version of "Star Wars", buy the older edition. It costs less and you have probably seen the movie stills elsewhere.

Comics are not Movies, damn it!

by Mark Lerer

As the contempoary comic book scene, even when one only considers the New York commercial product (and ignores fanzines and independent things), has been artistically and pictorially experimenting over the past few years to the point where many artists are doing things one never dreamed of thirty years ago, I find it astonishing that most comics fans are willing to equate comic art and films. True, both media use pictures and words to tell stories. True, one can use ffilm techniques to make comic book stories look a little more interesting. And true, they both require a strong sense of composition and balance, structure and layout, to work effectively. But, in terms of graphic storytelling, film and comics are similar only superficially, and, in fact, comics potentially can do more, in certain respects, than any movie can tell to tell stories.

The comic book artist doesn't only tell a story. He creates a whole world where that story can only take place. Through his style, he shows the reader pictures of a world where everything conforms too his sense of what-things-should-look-like. For example, when asked what he thought about Jack Kirby's handling of anatomy, Barry Smith once said: "I think Kirby's anatomy is beautiful. It's not CORRECT, but it's beautiful." Indeed, it isn't supposed to be correct, because in any FANTASTIC FOUR or ETERNALS story Kirby ever drew, everyone in the universe had huge muscles and angular faces. All the buildings were tall and rectangular and massive. Every machine was complex beyond belief. This makes sense because the

machines and buildings of Kirby's domain were built for people who were overmuscled and stocky! Even Kirby's television sets looked like they would be watched by people with broad shoulders and legs spread eight feet apart! Because he is consistent, Kirby gets away (rather successfully) with showing us a world which, though it'll never do for us, Ben Grimm and Captain America bounce around in.

The film cannot do this. As long as his movies are shot in our planet, the characters, must st least conform to principles of physics in the ways they move and look. Even in Lucas' "Star Wars", the characters were limited in how they could fight, act, and talk, because, no matter how well made-up, the actors were human and the sets made up of real stuff.

I reject the idea, too, that this can be compensated for in animation. Though Disney and Fleischer, and Bakshi in "WIZARDS" came very close, the creation of a total seperate reality is impossible here because the director doesn't have the tool of discrete seperate panels that the comic book artist can use to stop time and alter perspective dramatically. Face it, Steve Ditko's DR. STRANGE could never (at least not for a looong while!) be animated faithfully.

Just as the picture and the artist's style makes the comic book story generally not reproducible in other media, the narrative of the author clearly has no other substitute. What the pictures cannot (or simply DO not) tell, the words of the writer supply...at least in the ideal case...and just as it's never possible to fully adapt a novel into a film (by fully, I mean preserving all the elements of the original story), no movie could provide both pictures and all the devices an author can use in written prose. My example is Harvey Kurtzman's chilling anti-war story of the fifties, "Corpse On the Imjin", in which a young American soldier confronts the fact that he just killed one of the enemy. There is no dialog in the story, and synchronizing the narrative to the pictures is impossible; Kurtzman used the fact that each panel stands by itself as much as it fits into the whole story to write a cold, but marvelously paced, account of one soldier's feelings through a brief event.

There! I haven't even gotten into Marshal McLuhan!

Perhaps my argument has not been pursuasive. This may be because the readers of P. F. F. have never considered the artistic techniques and innovations which have been made in comics BECAUSE of the limitations of working on a piece of paper. Has no one read Krigstein's classic "Master Race" in which the artist has experimented with layers of depth and methods of timing the action to the actual flow of the readers' eyes? Hasn't everyone seen how Will Eisner used the printed page to parody and exploit other media (such as the funny pages themselves), in a way that could never be done on film?

Film is as legitimate an art form as the graphic story. However, the current group of people working in comics should not look solely to film as a means of introducing new and interesting ways of storytelling to their readers. The creation of a pictorially unique world, the use use of various techniques, and the development of written prose can all be done in comics perhaps better than in many other media. It's a shame many fans do not realize this.

Houston '76

CLUB NEWS

MEETINGS HELD SEPT., 10, OCT. 8, 1977

ANNIVERSARY EDITION

We now have a new plan for our anniversary edition. You can send in your page (or pages), size: 8 1/2 x 11, anytime during the year. If you don't want to send 100 copies, send uour original copy and $4.50, and we will have copies made. If you want to receive a copy of the 5th anniversary edition, give Ben two pages for the 6th edition NOW and you will receive both editons, 5 (now), and 6 (next summer).

PITTCON '78

More details later, but as it stands right now, Aptil 27th will be an advance preview for P. C. C. members only. On April 28, 29, and 30, we will be open to the public at the Hotel Webster Hall.

Meanwhile... the people from Pitt did not return our call and have been giving our representative the run-around. Anyway here are the various committees for the con:

PROGRAM BOOK:
Keith Matteson and Mark Gaudio
(Art size should be 8 1/2 x11)
PROGRAM:
Ron Kienzle, Elmer D. Harkema, and Ben Pondexter
FILMS:
Richard Felnagle, Roger Schoolcraft, and Elmer D. Harkema
ART SHOW:
Jim Johnston and Jim Furoczy
SECURITY:
Al Reilland and Jack McGoingle
SHOWCASE DISPLAY:
Steve Parys

How many people would be interested in a Pittcon T-shirt? We would need to sell about 50 in advance at about $4.50 each.

The Guest List for Pittcon should appear in the next issue of P. F. F.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

It's that time again people! For most of you, your sub runs out with this issue. As you can see from this issue, P. F. F. is becoming bigger and better with each edition. Professionally type-set from this issue on, the NEW P. F. F. will continue to improve and grow with each issue! It's still your fanzine, by you and for you, so don't only subscribe, CONTRIBUTE!

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO SUBSCRIBE NOW A SPECIAL OFFER! FOR YOUR HARD—EARNED $4.00 YOU'LL GET SEVEN (7) ISSUES INSTEAD OF THE USUAL SIX. SEVEN! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? (All money should be sent to Ben or given to him at the meetings. And so you don't forget, mail before midnight.)

And while we're on the subject of subscriptions, how many of you out there know about our PRO SUBSCRIPTION PLAN? For $4.00 a year, you can give a starving comic book artist, writer, or editor a subscription to P. F. F. Things are tough in New York, folks, so become

a patron saint to one of these poor, lost souls. You'll sleep much better.

Incidentally in exchange for this act of mercy, you get to be that pro's personal contact with the P. C. C. Look at the list of people that have already signed up:

Ron Kienzle for E. Nelson Bridwell
Jim Johnston for Dave Cockrum
Steve Parys for Arvell Jones
Elmer Harkema for Len Wein
Eric Sandberg for Ron Wilson
The Howard Bender Fan Club for Howard Bender
Ben Pondexter for Jack Harris AND Jim Shooter
Gary Sassaman for Paul Levitz AND Mike Gold

That leaves these poor people unaccounted for: Rogeer Slifer; Wally Wood; and Marv Wolfman.

RAFFLE TICKETS

As of Sept. 10th Jack McGonigle had sold $210.00 worth of tickets! Return your stubs and list with your name on it to make counting easier.

CLUB OFFICERS

Elmer D. Harkema has been appointed 2nd officer. Ron Kienzle has been appointed 3rd officer, but only until January.

CHRISTMAS THEATRE PARTY

"Jesus Christ, Superstar" will be at the Community College, South Campus, on Dec. 9. Let Ben know if you're interested.

WQED

We will be working with WQED for their various pledge periods. If you are interested in helping give Ben a call.

During the next pledge period, we will be working Saturday afternoon 12-7:30. This will include a free dinner, and it should occur in late Dec. or early Jan. Come hungry and ask Ben for the exact dates.

SHOWCASE

It looks like our best bet is to build one ourselves, so all you carpenters out there get ready. We'd like to build a sample one for the basement of the shop first, to see how it works out.

NEW PROGRAMS

We're all interested in trying something new every now and then, and the P. C. C. will be going boldly where no man has gone before into the following areas:

We will be starting the meetings a half hour earlier (6:00 p.m.) to discuss which comics impressed us (or didn't impress us) in the last month. We'd like to get some good letters out of these sessions, so come well-armed.

For those of you who would rather write, ye editor is interested in setting up an open forum here in the pages of P. F. F. Anything your little hearts desire can be discussed, so write me at: 324 Rowe St., Tamaqua Pa., 18252, and show the pros we do have a voice.

We have been offered working space at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh (alma mater of such people as Paul Gulacy, Kelly Freas, John Prentice, and your humble editor). We are trying to develop the following programs:

A program on THE DETECTIVE NOVEL, with a speaker from Pitt.

And an ART WORKSHOP for about 5-10 people.

In the meantime the WPSFA is trying to form a small science-fiction workshop, and is looking for some writers.

How about a parade with comic characters? It's a definite possibility. If your area holds holiday parades how about some super-hero floats? Check it out with your local Chamber of Commerce.

PARTING SHOTS

The people on the opposite page, who are putting together this collector's guide advertised here, need your help. They need copies of the following magazines to shoot the covers from. The magazines will of course be returned.

MAD MONSTERS: 1,2,3,4,5
FANTASTIC MONSTERS OF THE SCREEN: 2,3
CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN: 2, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
FOR MONSTERS ONLY: any
MONSTER MADNESS: 2
SHRIEK: 1, 2, 3, 4
Warren MONSTER WORLD: 10
QUASIMOTO'S MONSTER MAG: all issues
WORLD FAMOUS CREATURES: 1, 2, 3
MONSTERS & THINGS: 1, 2
MONSTER PARADE: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SUPERNATURAL: all issues
SPACE MEN: all issues
FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND: 21, 48, 83,107, 108, 132, 133
FLASHBACK: 1

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After much deliberation I've decided to drop all cover repros for the time being. I feel that these things are thrown around enough in fandom, and done much better elsewhere. I would like to thank Howard Bender for supplying them to me last issue and for the sketch he sent along for this issue. However if you're into the cover thing then latch onto THE COMIC READER. They are about the best source of news in the comics business, and have managed to make an extremely attractive package out of it to boot. It's the TV GUIDE of the comics industry and I can't reccommend it more highly, so I'll shut up.

Tom Tuttle, who did the beautiful "CARTOONEERS" strip that graces the centerfold of this month's issue, would like to hear your comments on it. I would like to run the strip as a regular feature, and maybe if enough of us speak up Tom will get the hint. You can catch him at most meetings or write to him at:

TOM TUTTLE
401 SIMMS ST.,
PITTSBURGH, PA.
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I want contributions, I want letters, I want criticism, I want to know you're alive. You are all out there, aren't you? This is your fanzine...CONTRIBUTE! even if it's only hate mail.

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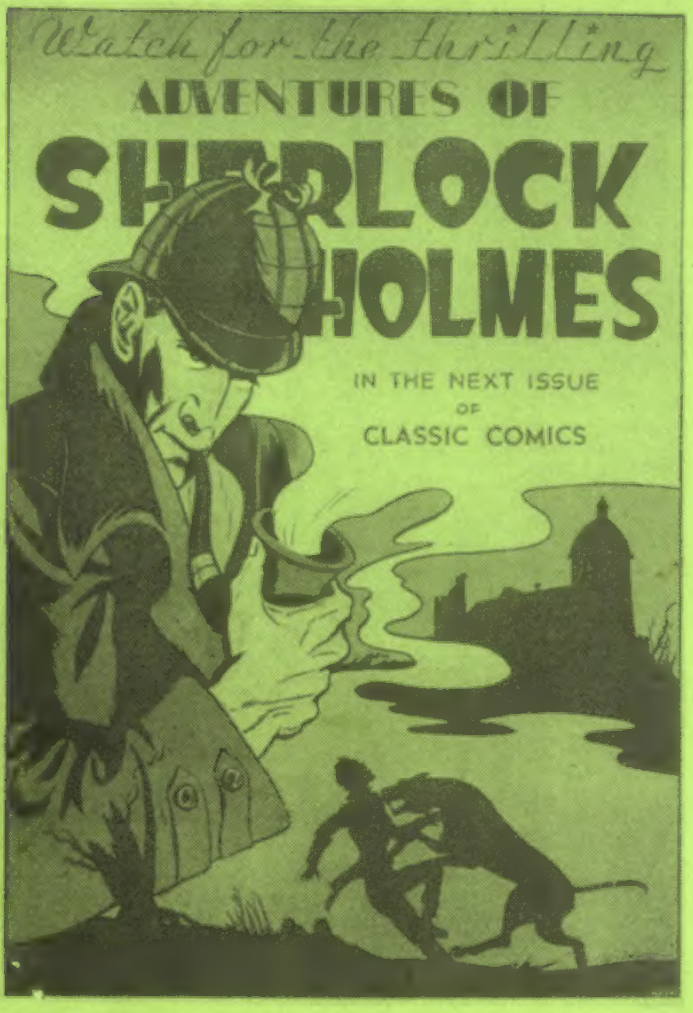

NEXT ISSUE

An in-depth look at Classics Comics by Mike Sawyer

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THE BULLETIN OF THE PGH. COMIX CLUB
NOVEMBER—DECEMBER, 1977

Aren't you too old to be reading comic books? Maybe.

by Paul Levitz

see page 3

Interview with Steve Gerber

by Mark Lerer

see page 11